

consumer marketplace to foreign investment and competition. When India began its historic market reforms in 1991 under the leadership of Prime Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao and Finance Minister Manmohan Singh, many observers felt that Mr. Birla, whose company is one of the largest manufacturers of automobiles in India, would resist the entry of foreign companies into the India marketplace. Aditya Birla, however, proved the observers wrong. He became a strong proponent of the reforms and entered into many important joint ventures with American companies. Most recently Aditya Birla signed agreements with AT&T to provide cellular and local telephone service in India.

Mr. Speaker, Aditya Birla was a visionary. His untimely death has left a void in the Indian corporate world that will be difficult to fill. I know my colleagues join me in sending condolences to the Birla family. His wife, son, and daughter should know that our thoughts and prayers are with them at this time.

MEDICARE PRESERVATION ACT OF 1995

SPEECH OF

HON. LOUIS STOKES

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 19, 1995

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2425) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to preserve and reform the Medicare Program:

Mr. STOKES. Mr. Chairman, I rise in recognition of the Gibbons-Dingell-McDermott substitute to H.R. 2425, the Medicare Preservation Act of 1995. The substitute is consistent with the \$90 billion figure which the Medicare actuaries and trustees have determined is

needed for Medicare's solvency. The measure is a vivid statement in support of the fact that Medicare can be fixed with three times less than the amount called for by the Republicans. The measure also confirms that fact that our Republican colleagues' measure, H.R. 2425, is truly designed for reconciliation purposes and, in this case, to give a tax cut to the rich, the people who need it the least.

Mr. Chairman, Medicare is critical to the solvency of the American families' budget. Neither seniors nor their families will be able to absorb the increased cost of health care that would result from the Republicans' \$270 billion cut in Medicare.

My colleagues, I wish that each of you could have heard our seniors at this morning's "speak out" telling their personal story of what living without Medicare would mean to the quality of their life. Bishop Marvin Johnson, a constituent of mine, told his story. He is a disabled senior suffering from diabetes. The medications which he requires already consume a large portion of his Social Security check. Without Medicare, he would be 1 of the over 41 million uninsured. Bishop Johnson also spoke about how the pain that his fellow seniors suffer just brings tears to his eyes.

Mr. Chairman, it's a sad day when the Republicans pull out all the stops in a concentrated, mean spirited, effort to take away health care coverage from the Nation's seniors.

It is just not right to force seniors on fixed income to pay more for less.

It is not right to deny seniors their choice of provider.

It is just not right to force seniors to have to choose between going to the doctors and buying food; or medicine and housing; or medical equipment and heat.

It is just not right to destroy the quality of life for the Nation's elderly in order to pay for a tax cut for the wealthy.

Mr. Chairman, the Republicans sneak attack on seniors is just wrong. Seniors have not even been allowed the opportunity to examine the Republicans' proposal or to present their concerns with respect to this massive life threatening legislative measure.

In fact, we meet here today against a backdrop of no hearings at all, having been held on the over 400 page Republican proposal, H.R. 2425. The Republican proposal more than doubled in size just since last night—over 500 pages of provisions were added. Yet, we are voting on the measure here today.

The size of the Republican document itself is an indication of the magnitude of the health care coverage that H.R. 2425 would take away from seniors. Citizens who have worked long and hard for the betterment of their country, to provide for their families, and to be able to put a little something away for a secure retirement, should not be used as the Republicans' pawn.

The American people must not tolerate the Republicans blatant disregard for the health care needs of the elderly. Their assault on the elderly is unconscionable and inhumane.

Mr. Chairman, when President Johnson signed the Medicare Program into law, he stated: "No longer will older Americans be denied the healing miracle of modern medicine; no longer will illness crush and destroy the savings that they have so carefully put away over a lifetime so that they might enjoy dignity in their later years; and, no longer will this Nation refuse the hand of justice to those who have given a lifetime of service and wisdom and labor to the progress of this progressive country."

Mr. Chairman, I ask my colleagues to join me in ensuring the stability of America's families. Vote "no" to H.R. 2425, the Republicans raid on Medicare.